



Kyle's Korner

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We all know that our homes are more than a place to live. The memories we create involve not only our own families but our neighbors' families as well. An important component of these great memories is the neighborhood where we live. Creating a safe, clean environment for our children and families is an important goal we all should share. This newsletter contains information on the many City services that residents can take advantage of to keep our neighborhoods looking great.

I was raised in Mesa and I am now raising my family here. In fact, I still live in the very same neighborhood I grew up in! I have wonderful memories of the community that helped shape who I am today, and want to work hard to preserve that opportunity for our current residents. If I can help that in any way, please do not hesitate to call on me at any time.

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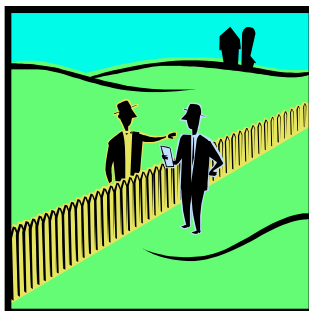
Being a Good Neighbor is Up to You

What makes a good neighbor? It goes beyond simply tolerating the people around you. At the very least, a good neighbor makes an effort to become acquainted with his or her neighbors. While that may be a good start, it does not address the challenges facing neighborhoods.

Throughout our community we have many individuals who are concerned with the changes going on around them, but only a small percentage of people make a commitment to get involved. While we applaud those who are making the sacrifice to effect positive change, many more are needed. You may believe that becoming involved requires an extensive time commitment, but the old adage "many hands make light work"

rings especially true when working to strengthen your neighborhood.

When you move into an area, what responsibilities do you have as a part of that community? As homeowners or renters, there are some basic expectations. First, we should all show the pride we have in our homes by taking care of the property. Keeping our yards free of trash, parking vehicles appropriately, touching up peeling paint and properly caring for our grass and plants sends a clear message to visitors that we live in a community of pride. After all, continual upkeep is much easier than taking on a major overhaul later.



Take the time to get to know your neighbors; you'll be amazed at the difference it can make!

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4 Quick Facts

1. Mesa's Street Lighting Division maintains more than 30,000 street lights throughout the City.
2. The Mesa planning area is about the size of Southern California's San Fernando Valley.
3. In 2001, Mesa residents used 32 billion gallons of water.
4. As of December 31, 2002, Code Compliance Officers observed 25,536 addresses, confirmed 28,431 violations and abated 27,949 violations.

Kyle's Q & A

Q: My neighbors and I have been thinking about starting a Neighborhood Watch. Is this something we should do and how do we go about doing this?

A: Neighborhood Watches are a simple, inexpensive and effective way to prevent crime in your neighborhood. Neighborhood Watch sends a message to potential intruders that homes in your neighborhood are not easily accessible and that you and your neighbors are actively involved in preventing crime in the area. I encourage everyone to consider starting a Neighborhood Watch in your area. To get started, call (480) 644-2300.

Q: I've been noticing a lot of speeding in my neighborhood. What can I do to get people to slow down?

A: The safety of our neighborhood streets is a top priority to the City of Mesa Transportation Division. Making Mesa's streets the safest possible requires a combination of enforcement, engineering and education. Programs include speed humps, Neighborhood Pace Car, radar loan and selective enforcement. If you would like more information about keeping your neighborhood streets safe call (480) 644-2160.



Email your questions to me at:
councilmember.jones@cityofmesa.org

Q: I've noticed patches of graffiti popping up in my neighborhood. How can I get these eyesores removed?

A: The City's Street Maintenance Group can help. Call the Graffiti Hotline at (480) 644-3083.

Q: We recently remodeled our kitchen and need to dispose of the old appliances. If we can't put them in the black barrel, what do we do?

A: For a nominal fee, the City of Mesa provides residents with a convenient collection service for unwanted appliances such as refrigerators, dishwashers, washers/dryers, hot water heaters, and stoves. The City also accepts other large metal appliances that do not contain freon - like water heaters, washers, dryers, stoves, dishwashers and evaporative coolers. These appliances are collected and recycled along with freon-containing appliances. Please contact the Solid Waste Division at (480) 644-2688 for pricing information and/or to schedule a pickup as well as to receive preparation requirements (i.e. - removal of refrigerator and freezer doors).

SCULPTURES IN THE STREETS RETURNS TO DOWNTOWN MESA

The Sculptures in the Streets have returned to downtown Mesa and like you've never seen them before! The sculptures, which will remain on the sidewalks of downtown Main Street through March 31, 2003, were made by 32 different artists from across the country. Most of the artwork is in bronze, with an occasional steel or stone piece.

The exhibit includes 44 temporary pieces plus 10 pieces that have been part of



Humpty Dumpty and a new friend watch the Main Street passersby.

Mesa's permanent sculpture collection. At the end of the four-month exhibit, Mesa's Permanent Sculpture Panel will select at least one of the temporary pieces to become part of the permanent collection.

These sculptures attract many visitors to Mesa every year, and have truly become a point of pride for Mesa residents. Be sure to see the sculptures before they are gone!

Recycling Do's & Don'ts

Recycling is an easy way to do your part to preserve our environment. The City of Mesa provides solid waste customers blue barrels for recyclables. Items placed into the blue barrel should not be bagged, and they should be relatively clean, dry and empty. Examples of acceptable items include *aluminum, cardboard/chipboard, glass, metal cans, newspaper, magazines, paper, plastic bottles, jugs and jars as well as telephone books*. Plastic bags, packing materials, motor oil containers, potato chip bags, paper towels, pizza boxes, diapers and PVC piping are not recyclable and should not be placed in your blue barrels. Solid waste customers interested in obtaining an additional free blue barrel or educa-

tional video explaining the Blue Barrel Program should call the City's Recycling Hotline at (480) 644-2222.



Mesa collected nearly 29,000 tons of recyclables from the Blue Barrel Program and more than 13,000 tons of green waste through the Green Barrel Program during Fiscal Year 2001/2002!

Need help maintaining your property? Code Compliance can help.

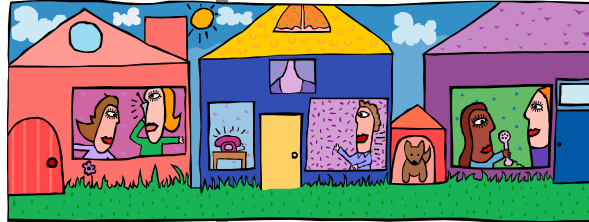
Registering your neighborhood can have many benefits. Did you know that the Code Compliance Division offers tools for lending to neighborhood groups and community organizations for group clean-up efforts? Tools may be borrowed for free, but must be signed out to a responsible party and returned to Code Compliance by the agreed date. Brooms, garden hoes, garden spades, hedge shears, loppers, rakes, shovels, weed eaters, wheelbarrows, wire brushes, etc. are available for use. Supplies such as protective eyewear, work gloves, water coolers and garbage bags also are available. However, in order to borrow the tools, you must be part of a registered neighborhood or community organization and the tools must be used for a group clean-up activity.

The Alley Clean-Up Program teams the Code Compliance, Solid Waste and Street Maintenance divisions along with the Maricopa County Adult Probation, to clean alleys selected from one of Mesa's registered neighborhoods. Residents in the area are contacted with door hanger notices if they are in violation two weeks prior to the cleanup. One week prior to the clean-up, code compliance officers go door to door with an announcement of the clean up and information about City services. Resident

participation is encouraged in the Alley Clean-Up Program.

The Code Repair Program provides loan assistance to low-income, owner-occupied properties. The Housing Services Division administers this program in conjunction with Code Compliance. Financial assistance is in the form of a non-interest-bearing loan.

A permanent lien will be placed against the property for the loan amount exceeding \$500.00. The balance of the loan shall become due and payable upon the sale, exchange or transfer of the property to a non-qualifying homeowner.



Being a good neighbor includes taking care of your property. If you are experiencing problems maintaining your property, don't be afraid to ask for help!

These are great ways to keep your neighborhood looking great. Contact the Code Compliance Division at (480) 644-2061 for additional information or to make an appointment to check out tools. For more information on registering your neighborhood, contact the City of Mesa Neighborhood Outreach Office at (480) 644-4067.

Volunteers needed to help return \$99.6 million to Mesa residents

The IRS is looking for volunteers to help Mesa residents claim the almost \$100 million in tax credits they may be entitled to. Through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, volunteers will prepare basic tax returns and related documents at community and neighborhood locations. According to the IRS, an estimated \$99.6 million in tax credits available to Mesa residents went unclaimed last year. For example, the Earned Income Tax Credit can refund up to \$4,140 to working families, even those whose incomes are low enough that they do not owe any federal taxes.

No experience is required to be a volunteer. The IRS provides free training and materials. Students work at their own pace to learn basic income tax law for federal and Arizona state returns. The IRS estimates its new online training class takes 24 hours to complete. Other volunteer opportunities

include greeters (screening), site coordinators and interpreters.

VITA program participants can volunteer at the site of their choice and select a time that best fits their schedule. Evening and weekend hours are available. To obtain a volunteer packet, call (480) 644-2387 or e-mail lisa.wilson@cityofmesa.org. For other tax questions, including questions regarding the Earned Income Tax Credit, call the IRS at (800) 829-1040.

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Getting to Know You: Mesa's Solid Waste Drivers

Have you ever wondered what it takes to be a part of the collection team that services the 100,000+ homes in Mesa on a weekly basis? All we really know is that we place our barrels out to the curb by 6 a.m., go to work and by the time we return, the barrels are empty and we roll them back in. Well, the men and women who service your barrels are well-trained professionals who take great pride in their work and whose goal is to deliver efficient collection service while maintaining high levels of safety.

So what does it take to be a Solid Waste Equipment Operator? In order to be considered for one of these positions, individuals need to have at least one-year experience driving vehicles weighing at least two-and-a-half tons as well as operating heavy equipment, possess prior solid waste experience, exhibit excellent coordination and maneuverability skills, and have a CDL class B driver's license.

Safety is at the forefront of all solid waste operations. At the beginning of each workday, all drivers perform a 20-minute pre-trip inspection to ensure that their vehicles are in proper working condition. Once they are ready to head out, they climb into their cabs or "offices for the day," which offer many comfort features such as air conditioning, air-ride seats and ergonomically designed interiors to

help them maintain high levels of productivity. On any given day, each driver can collect anywhere between 900-1,200 barrels and has to deal with a variety of obstacles such as parked vehicles, moving traffic and pedestrians. However, they still have the time to answer residents' questions and give a quick hello. Typically, each area can be serviced by up to four drivers on a rotating basis, so don't be surprised if you see the same familiar face occasionally. It's just an opportunity for them to become familiar with their assigned area and feel more connected with the neighborhood.

Of course, to showcase the great talent of our drivers, the Solid Waste Association of North America, an organization dedicated to addressing waste management issues, hosts regional and national competitions to provide solid waste equipment operators the opportunity to demonstrate their driving skills. One of our very own drivers, Frank Saavedra, a seasoned veteran who has been with the City of Mesa since 1983, took first place last year in the automated side loader category and had the opportunity to compete at the national level. Frank's colleagues also placed in their respective categories, only adding to the fact that Mesa has some of the best and brightest talent providing quality service to its residents.



Next time you see your friendly solid waste driver, make sure to wave hello and brighten their day with a smile!

MESA DISTRICT 4 NEWSLETTER

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Visit us on the Web!!
www.cityofmesa.org

Being a good neighbor is up to you

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But being a good neighbor isn't just about keeping your property up, it also means being considerate of others. It means remembering to not play your music too loudly (both at home and on the road) and being mindful to not use loud tools too early in the morning or too late in the evening. Remember, after 10 p.m. any excessive noise--be it music, power tools, hammering or even loud partying--is not only inconsiderate, it's also an ordinance violation.

Some people believe it is their right to do whatever they want with their personal property. Our individual rights and freedoms only extend to the point where they begin to infringe upon the rights and freedoms of others. Since individual interpretation of where that point lies varies greatly, laws like the noise ordinance were put in place to help guide us. But, whether there's an ordinance or not, the bottom line is that good neighbors

are those who are thoughtful and considerate of those around them. Beyond these basic expectations, your level of involvement is up to you.

Finally, take responsibility for your home and encourage your neighbors to make your neighborhood the best it can be. Mesa is a remarkable, diverse community with a wide range of neighborhoods and dedicated, caring residents. Realizing the remarkable potential your neighborhood has to foster a safe, caring environment for you and your family is up to you.



Take the time to become involved in your neighborhood.